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Teachers (556) in the elementary schools of Florida completed a Likert-type rating scale containing 65 items related to guidance practices, and 15 related to guidance principles. The guidance function was perceived as a major responsibility of the classroom teacher. Major guidance functions used by the teachers are listed. The practices having the greatest value for these teachers include: (1) using cumulative record information, (2) identifying exceptional children, (3) helping children explore the world of work, (4) helping children with learning and adjustment problems, (5) helping to develop special interests and aptitudes, (6) taking care of physical deficiencies, and (7) helping pupils examine their attitudes and feelings toward themselves. The elementary teachers recognized the need for additional guidance services, and accepted the idea of a guidance specialist. The role of this specialist is developed in relation to those areas in which teachers felt assistance was needed. (PS)

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THE TEACHER'S GUIDANCE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS AS REPORTED BY ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

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The growth of the guidance movement in the elementary schools has been notable in the past 20 years. Most if not all of the textbooks on the subject have appeared since 1948, and have been addressed primarily to the role of the classroom teacher in elementary guidance. However, over the last decade those persons writing position papers and conducting empirical studies of roles and functions of elementary guidance personnel, have indicated the need for and the increasing importance of pupil personnel specialists. These specialists complement the instructional and guidance functions of the classroom teacher. The pupil personnel specialist to emerge most recently has been the elementary school counselor.

Role and function studies in guidance over the last 10 years have centered about the responsibilities of the elementary school counselor. For the most part they have dealt with perceptual differences among counselors, teachers, administrators, and counselor educators regarding the guidance responsibilities of the elementary school counselor (Bosdell, 1958; Foster, 1967; Greene, 1967; Hart, 1961; McCreary and Miller, 1966; McDougall and Reitan, 1963; McKellar, 1963; Nitzschke, 1964; Raines, 1964; Wrenn, 1962). Two common approaches used have been surveying the opinions of selected educational personnel regarding the role of the school counselor or assigning guidance functions to various educational roles.

Few studies exist which attempt to define the teacher's guidance responsibilities or the assistance he needs in order to more adequately meet pupil needs or deal with pupil problems. Investigations using teachers as the respondents to identify their guidance role and functions have been conducted by Boyd (1953), Brown and Pruett (1957), Muro (1965), Williams (1957), and Young (1962).

Some general trends or recommendations which seem to be evident in the research of the teacher's guidance role and functions are as follows:

1. An investigation of the guidance role and functions of all educational personnel should be made at the elementary school level. The classroom teacher in particular should be consulted to ascertain what help he needs in facilitating the development and adjustment of children (Hart, 1961; Nitzschke, 1964; Raines, 1964).

2. Teachers for the most part are inclined to accept their own guidance responsibility. When teachers are asked to assign responsibility for guidance functions, a significant percentage of them assign one-fourth to one-half of the guidance practices to the classroom teacher (Brown and Pruett, 1967; Williams, 1957).

3. The teacher sees his own role in the guidance program as one of identifying pupil needs and problems, serving as a source of personal information for pupils, working with pupils having learning or adjustment difficulties, working with the home, and making referrals (Boyd, 1953; Brown and Pruett, 1967; Hansen, 1963).

4. There is also recognition by the teachers that an elementary school counselor or some other pupil personnel specialist is reguired to implement the guidance program (Brown and Pruett, 1967; Williams, 1957).

It is evident from a review of the studies dealing with the guidance role and functions of the classroom teacher and the guidance specialist that there is need for more basic research with the teacher as the focal point. The literature and related research suggest a need for additional investigation of the guidance role of the classroom teacher, the extent to which he is using certain guidance principles and practices, the importance of these guidance principles and practices, and how he sees these principles and practices being improved for the purpose of meeting the varying needs of pupils.

In order to highlight the central role of the elementary teacher in guidance, the following statements have been taken from the literature to represent the respective view of each authority. They support the basic assumption of this study that the teacher's instructional role and his guidance role are interrelated in facilitating learning and enhancing individual development:

> Should the classroom teacher play a vital role in a program of guidance services? Most authorities, most administrators, most guidance specialists, and most teachers will agree that the classroom teacher occupies a front-line position in all aspects of educational endeavor (Farwell and Peters, 1955, p. 231).
>
> Most guidance work must be done in the classroom by teachers who possess the guidance viewpoint and incorporate it in their teaching and other relationships with students (Gordon, 1956, p. 7).
>
> Guidance in elementary schools centers around the classroom teacher as the key person (Cottingham, 1956, p. 10).

In the literature, at least, the teacher has by now been generally accepted as a personnel worker, and as the years have passed the teacher has come to occupy a much more important place in the total guidance program in the school (Arbuckle, 1957, p. 56).

The actual facts, however, show that the classroom teacher still has, and probably always will carry the largest share of guidance services (Barr, 1958, p. vi).

In this volume there is an effort to move guidance back into the classroom to develop the integral relationship between guidance and teaching and to restore the teacher to his vital role as the primary guidance worker (Johnston, et al., 1959, p. vii).

This book is written around the viewpoint that the regular classroom teacher is the key guidance worker. It does, however, recognize the significant contributions that specialists can make toward guiding elementary school children (Knapp, 1959, p. vi).

The teacher is the key guidance worker (Johnson, et al., 1961, p. 22).

Whether or not there are other members of the guidance staff, the classroom teacher is the real key to the effectiveness of the program (Detjen and Detjen, 1963, p. vii).

Recognizing that the classroom teacher is at the heart of efforts to introduce guidance programs in the elementary school, the book emphasizes the principles and techniques that will enable her to assume this responsibility (Garry, 1963, p. vii).

The teacher is a key person in the guidance program . . . (Willey and Dunn, 1964, p. 10).

The study being reported by this writer grew out of the following observations:

1. Although the guidance role of the teacher has been identified in the literature, very little empirical research has been conducted to determine whether the classroom teacher accepts this role either in practice or in theory.

2. Except for soliciting his perceptions of the role of the elementary school counselor, the attitudes and opinions of the classroom teacher have been largely neglected in establishing a rationale for elementary guidance.

3. The classroom teacher is in a strategic position to assess the needs of children and indicate the value of certain guidance principles and practices for meeting these common and exceptional needs.

Problem

The problem investigated in this research was a study of the role of the teacher in elementary guidance as it was perceived by classroom teachers in the elementary schools of Florida. The purposes of this study were to (1) determine to what extent classroom teachers were using certain guidance principles and practices, (2) ascertain the value classroom teachers ascribed to certain guidance principles and practices, (3) ascertain how the classroom teachers perceived the improvement of these same guidance principles and practices, and (4) to determine whether there were differences in teacher perceptions as a function of personal or professional characteristics of teachers or a function of varying school characteristics.

Procedures

The population identified for the study was the classroom teachers in the public elementary schools in the state of Florida for the 1965-1966 school year. A stratified random sampling technique was used with schools as the basic sampling unit. A total of forty-five schools and 556 elementary teachers in grades kindergarten through six participated. The major instrument used in this investigation was a Likert-type rating scale developed by

the researcher specifically for the purpose of obtaining data from the teachers on three variables--the use, value, and improvement of the guidance principles and practices. Sixty practices and fifteen principles of guidance comprised the seventy-five items on the rating scale.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the findings of the study. They are based on the data gathered from a stratified random sample of 556 elementary teachers in forty-five schools. The results have been generalized to the population which includes the classroom teachers in the public elementary schools of Florida. Only those conclusions relevant to the topic of this paper have been included from the larger study (Witmer, 1967).

1. The teachers in the public elementary schools of Florida appear to accept the guidance function in education as a major responsibility of the classroom teacher for meeting the varying needs of children. The extent to which they use the guidance principles and practices, and the extent to which they indicate the teacher is the one who can best improve the use of a majority of the principles and practices, support the contention that the teacher in the elementary school is the major source and activating force for most of the guidance practices in the school.

2. The elementary teachers seem to make greatest use of such guidance functions as using information

in the cumulative records; identifying the needs of exceptional children and the special needs of normal children; helping children explore the world of work, their educational interests and opportunities; serving as a source for personal and social information; helping children with learning and adjustment problems; understanding child growth and development; and promoting a psychological climate in which there is mutual trust and acceptance among the teacher and the pupils.

In addition to the above functions for which the teacher is largely responsible as an individual, the teachers as members of the school guidance team work with parents, and make referrals to and hold consultations with other members of the staff, outside agencies or individuals.

3. Certain guidance principles and practices appear to have greater value than others for meeting the varying needs of pupils. Those practices which have greatest value are using the information in the cumulative records; identifying exceptional children such as the slow learners, intellectually gifted, and the emotionally disturbed; helping children explore the world of work; serving as a source for personal and social information; helping children with learning and adjustment problems; helping pupils in areas in which they excel or show special interests; helping

children who need essentials in health, clothing, and food; and helping pupils examine their attitudes and feelings toward themselves and matters in everyday life. The most important team function is working with parents of normal and exceptional children.

Additional guidance functions or principles having extensive value are understanding child growth and development; providing a psychological climate in which there is mutual trust and acceptance among the teacher and the pupils; encouraging a wholesome view of self; recognizing that all children have a variety of adjustment problems; and providing learning experiences in which the child feels reasonably sure of success.

4. The elementary teachers see only limited use and moderate value for interpreting certain appraisal data to the pupils. Discussing with the class the meaning of mental ability and achievement test results, and interpreting to individual pupils their achievement test results, are guidance practices which are used less and assigned less value than most of the practices.

5. The elementary teachers recognize the need for additional guidance services in the elementary schools, since the value they ascribe to guidance principles and practices is significantly greater than their use of these same principles and practices.

6. A majority of the elementary teachers see the need for improving most of the guidance principles and practices, largely through providing additional time for the teacher and through the assistance of an elementary specialist.

7. The elementary teachers appear to accept the role of a guidance specialist for complementing the guidance function of the teacher. Almost one-third of the guidance practices are reported by the teachers as best being improved by the assistance of an elementary specialist. Although this specialist has not been defined, it is assumed that these guidance functions could be performed by such pupil personnel specialists as a school psychologist, school counselor, or school social worker.

8. The teachers desire assistance from an elementary specialist largely in the areas of appraisal or child study, counseling with children, consulting with parents, and in coordinating the guidance function with other school personnel, the parents, and the community. Those guidance practices which teachers indicate an elementary specialist can best improve are identifying exceptional children such as the emotionally disturbed, slow learners, physically handicapped, talented, and intellectually gifted; administering intelligence and achievement tests;

testing new pupils; using standardized group tests for diagnostic purposes; helping children who need health, clothing, or food essentials; working with children who have learning or adjustment problems; providing conferences for children with discipline problems; working with parents of exceptional children; making referrals and providing pertinent information to various agencies and individuals; using the case conference for child study; and recommending curriculum changes as a result of analysis of pupil achievement.

The basic premise of this paper has been that the classroom teacher is a key person in implementing the guidance function in education. His almost infinite number of interpersonal interactions with pupils makes him responsible for creating a psychological environment which either facilitates or inhibits learning and individual development. His contact with the pupils in his classroom for almost 900 hours in an academic year cannot be ignored in developing a rationale for elementary guidance. His role has to be given a central position in developing a team approach to elementary guidance so that instruction and guidance are interrelated in such a way that they complement each other for achieving the objectives of education.

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